THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR) (a) and (b) Centre for Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad has successfully introduced a colon cancer gene in the fruit fly drosophilla. This model of the fly can be used as a target for anti-cancer screening.

(c) A patent has been applied for by CSIR in USA for the invention.

Increase in Psychic Patients

†1414. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of psychic patients is increasing in the country constantly;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that most of the psychic patients are boys and girls in the age group of 30; and

(d) if so, the plan Government are making to prevent the younger generation from this disease?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The number of persons with mental illness is increasing due to changes in demographics such as increase in population and over all increase in the rate of depression world wide. Epidemiological studies have revealed that 1 to 2% of the population have major mental disorders and 5 to 10% suffer from minor mental disorders. Although incidence of psychiatric disordes is more in younger persons in the age range of the 20-35 years, the prevalence rates become highest in age group of 35-44 years due to chronicity of cases and the number getting comulated towards higher are group 35-44 years.

(d) The Government has already initiated a pilot programme for providing care for persons with mental disorder in selected districts in the Country. The district Mental Health Programme, launched in 1996-97, is currently being implemented in 25 districts covering 20 States and Union Territories. Its aim is to identify persons suffering from various mental disorders and epilepsy and manage them at the primary health care centre and district level by trained doctors and with the active support of the families and the community in which the patient lives.

†Original notice of the question was reeceived in Hindi.